

Appl. No. : 10/773,667
Filed : February 6, 2004

REMARKS

Amendments to the Claims

Applicant notes the statement of Allowable Subject Matter in the aforementioned Office Action, to the effect that Claims 4, 14, 15, and 17-19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, independent Claim 1 has been amended as set forth above to incorporate the limitations previously recited in allowable dependent Claim 4, which has now been canceled. Independent Claim 16 has been amended to incorporate the limitations previously recited in allowable dependent Claim 17, which has now been canceled. Allowable dependent Claims 14, 15, 18, and 19 have been rewritten in independent form as new Claims 20-23, respectively. Claim 5 has been amended so that it no longer depends from a canceled claim. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments.

Applicant respectfully requests entry of the above Amendment to the Claims and issuance of a Notice of Allowance with respect to Claims 1-3, 5-16 and 18-23.

Applicant reserves the right to file divisional and/or continuation applications containing claims directed to all or part of the subject matter described in the instant application, including the subject matter of any claims amended, withdrawn, or canceled at any time during the prosecution of this application, and thus unclaimed subject matter is not dedicated to the public.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 5, 10 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0081464 ("Bruns"). Claims 6-9 and 11-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bruns in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,883,548 ("Onoki"). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections on the basis that the Office has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

In addition, Applicant respectfully submits that these rejections are moot in view of the Amendment to the Claims set forth above and the previous indication of allowable subject matter by the Office. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections.

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Conclusion

In view of the statement of Allowable Subject Matter in the aforementioned Office Action and the Amendments to the Claims set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance, early notification of which would be appreciated. The Office is respectfully invited to contact Applicant's representative at the telephone number provided below with any questions or concerns regarding this application.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: August 2, 2004

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AMEND
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